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DESCRIPTION OF A NEW *LANIUS* FROM LOWER CALIFORNIA

By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER

ELEVEN specimens of a very distinct undescribed shrike from Lower California have for a long time been in the United States National Museum.

The larger part of these are deposited in the collection of the Biological Survey, and were obtained by Mr. E. W. Nelson and Mr. E. A. Goldman during their long trip down the peninsula in the year 1905. In view of the present interest in Lower California it seems desirable to publish a description of this new form of *Lanius ludovicianus*; and it may appropriately bear the name of the well-known chief of the Biological Survey, and, therefore, stand as,

***Lanius ludovicianus nelsoni*, subsp. nov.**

Chars. subs.—Similar to *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*, but bill larger; white terminal areas on outer rectrices much smaller; upper parts averaging darker, though with the upper tail-coverts more conspicuously whitish; lower surface more tinged with grayish, particularly on the posterior portion.

Description.—Type, adult male, no. 196172, U. S. Nat. Mus., Todos Santos, southern Lower California, December 26, 1905; E. W. Nelson and E. A. Goldman; original number, 11885. Upper parts between neutral gray and deep neutral gray, somewhat brownish anteriorly, and paling to rather brownish light neutral gray on rump; upper tail-coverts white, anteriorly slightly washed with pale neutral gray; tail black, all the rectrices except the middle pair tipped with creamy white, this area 19 mm. long on the inner web of the outer pair, but becoming smaller on each succeeding pair; also the outer web of the outermost pair of tail-feathers broadly margined externally with creamy white; scapulars basally gray like the back, but becoming broadly white on their terminal portions, forming a conspicuous white area on each side of the interscapulum; wings black on their exposed portions, the inner webs of the quills chaetura black, changing on the secondaries inwardly to chaetura drab, the inner margins of these feathers brownish white; broad tips of the secondaries, narrow tips of the inner primaries, and a large basal speculum on the primaries, creamy white; greater and median wing-coverts black, the former with small terminal shaft-spots of dull white; lesser wing-coverts like the back; a narrow band across the anterior portion of the forehead, continuous with a broad stripe through the eye and across the ear coverts to the side of the neck, black; a narrow grayish white superciliary stripe; sides of neck like the cervix; chin and throat creamy white; rest of the lower surface and the lining of wings white; the breast and jugulum slightly tinged with buffy, the flanks, sides of breast and of body washed with pale neutral gray, least so on the sides of the breast.

Measurements.—Male: wing, 98-99.5 (average, 98.7) mm.; tail, 100-107 (102.6); exposed culmen, 16-18.8 (17); tarsus, 27.3-29 (28.5); middle toe without claw, 16-17.5 (17).

Female: wing, 95-98 (average, 96.1) mm.; tail, 97.5-101 (100.1); exposed culmen, 15.5-16 (15.9); tarsus, 25.5-27.5 (26.9); middle toe without claw, 15-17 (16.4).

Geographic distribution.—The southern two-thirds of Lower California, including the adjacent islands, north to 28° 30' north latitude.

Remarks.—This new form is similar to *Lanius ludovicianus mexicanus*, but has a conspicuously larger bill, much paler upper parts, somewhat more grayish-washed lower parts, and smaller white tips on the tail-feathers. It resembles also *Lanius ludovicianus anthonyi* and *Lanius ludovicianus mearnsi* of the Santa Barbara Islands, California, but differs in its larger bill, very much paler upper surface, and somewhat paler lower parts. In its great restriction of white on the rectrices it is like these last mentioned two forms, and in this differs from all the other races of *Lanius ludovicianus*, even *Lanius ludovicianus mexicanus*. In fact on account of this, breeding examples from Santa Margarita Island, Lower California, have been referred by Mr. Ridgway¹ to *Lanius ludovicianus mearnsi*. Specimens thus recorded had been, however, skinned from alcohol and so much stained that their real characters, except those of size and white tail-spots, are obscured.

¹Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 50, pt. III, 1904, p. 252.

The type of *Lanius ludovicianus nelsoni* is a winter bird, chosen because in perfect plumage, but we have also breeding specimens from Todos Santos, Lower California, the type locality, both in worn breeding plumage and in juvenile plumage, and these show plainly the distinctive characters of large bill and small white tail-markings. One example from La Paz, Lower California (no. 196171, U. S. Nat. Mus.), taken December 23, 1905, is decidedly darker than the type, which latter represents the normal coloration. A single bird from Rosarito, the northernmost locality for *Lanius ludovicianus nelsoni*, seems to be entirely typical, and indicates the extent of the geographic distribution of this form in that direction.

While *Lanius ludovicianus nelsoni* is the breeding form of Lower California, *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli* occurs there in winter, even as far south as the Cape San Lucas region, as the following three specimens in the Biological Survey collection show: no. 196165, U. S. Nat. Mus., male, Santo Domingo, Lower California, September 27, 1905; no. 196168, U. S. Nat. Mus., female, Magdalena Island, Lower California, November 24, 1905; and no. 196175, U. S. Nat. Mus., male, San José del Cabo, January 6, 1906.

Detailed measurements of this new race are given below for purposes of comparison.

MEASUREMENTS OF SPECIMENS OF *LANIUS LUDOVICIANUS NELSONI*, ALL FROM LOWER CALIFORNIA, AND TAKEN BY E. W. NELSON AND E. A. GOLDMAN UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

U. S. Nat. Mus. No.	Sex	Locality	Date	Wing	Tail	Exposed culmen	Tarsus	Middle toe without claw
149925	[♂] vix ad.	Santa Margarita Id. ¹	May, 1888	99.5	100.0	16.5	29.0	17.5
25438	♂	Todos Santos ²	.....	98.0	107.0	18.8	28.5	17.3
196172 ³	♂	Todos Santos	Dec. 26, 1905	98.0	101.5	16.0	29.0	17.0
196167	♂	Rancho, Santo Domingo, 25 mi. S. San Jorge	Nov. 14, 1905	99.0	101.5	16.5	28.5	17.0
196171	♂	La Paz	Dec. 23, 1905	99.0	103.0	17.0	27.3	16.0
		Average of five males:		98.7	102.6	17.0	28.5	17.0
149924	♀ vix ad.	Santa Margarita Id. ¹	May 2, 1888	96.0	101.0	15.5	27.0	16.0
196169	[♀]	Santa Margarita Id.	Nov. 29, 1905	95.5	97.5	16.0	27.5	17.0
196170	♀	Llano de Yrais	Dec. 13, 1905	96.0	101.0	.....	25.5	15.0
196164	♀	Rosarito	Sept. 24, 1905	98.0	101.0	16.0	27.3	17.0
196166	♀	Calmalli	Sept. 29, 1905	95.0	.....	16.0	27.0	17.0
		Average of five females:		96.1	100.1	15.9	26.9	16.4

¹Collector unknown.

²Collected by J. Xantus.

³Type.

Washington, D. C., October 15, 1918.